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To megali idea - dead or alive?: the domestic determinants of Greek foreign policy

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TO MEGALI IDEA - DEAD OR ALIVE?
The Domestic Determinants of Greek Foreign Policy

by

Mary A. Jenkins

March 1994

Thesis Advisor: Roman A. Laba

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This paper discusses *to megali idea*, or the "Great Idea," which is at the origin of modern Greek nationalism. The "Idea" was to regain lands which formerly belonged to the Greek empire. The current Greek government's official line disavows any expansionist views, but the "Idea" has never really died. In amplification of this Idea and its ramifications, the origin and character of Greek nationalism are examined, especially as they pertain to the formation of Greek foreign policy. The problems of minorities within Greece, the Greek diaspora and the influence of the Greek Orthodox Church on foreign policy issues are also analyzed. The findings aid in a greater understanding of Greek foreign policy both in today's Balkan crisis and in Greece's ongoing conflict with Turkey, as well as illuminating the potential for Greece's involvement in future Balkan crises.

Many of the conclusions presented in this paper were based on primary language research and interviews throughout mainland Greece and eighteen of the major islands, from September through November 1993. National elections which brought to power a socialist Prime Minister were held during October 1993, amid much rhetoric and international debate over questions of an "independent" Macedonia and minorities in Northern Epirus.

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TO MEGALI IDEA - DEAD OR ALIVE?
The Domestic Determinants of Greek Foreign Policy

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses *to megali idea*, or the "Great Idea," which is at the origin of modern Greek nationalism. The "Idea" was to regain lands which formerly belonged to the Greek empire. The current Greek government's official line disavows any expansionist views, but the "Idea" has never really died. In amplification of this Idea and its ramifications, the origin and character of Greek nationalism are examined, especially as they pertain to the formation of Greek foreign policy. The problems of minorities within Greece, the Greek diaspora and the influence of the Greek Orthodox Church on foreign policy issues are also analyzed. The findings aid in a greater understanding of Greek foreign policy both in today's Balkan crisis and in Greece's ongoing conflict with Turkey, as well as illuminating the potential for Greece's involvement in future Balkan crises.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TO MEGALI IDEA--DEAD OR ALIVE?:
The Domestic Determinants of Greek Foreign Policy

LT Mary A. Jenkins
March 1994

The Greeks are critically important players in the Balkan arena, and the future for Greece looks very difficult. The opportunities offered by European Union (EU) membership have not been fully exploited, and the Greek financial picture is less than ideal. Greece is a member of the key institutions of European security, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU, yet is a major participant in the Balkan crisis which threatens to turn into a third Balkan war. An understanding of the domestic context of Greece goes a long way toward revealing the potential for future Balkan crises.

The premise of this paper is that the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα*, or "Great Idea," which is at the origin of modern Greek nationalism, is still alive in the hearts and minds of modern Greeks. The "Idea" was to regain lands which formerly belonged to the Greek empire. The current Greek government's official line disavows any expansionist views, and has done so since the early 1950's. The "Idea," however, is not really dead. The Great Idea lives in the Greek subconscious. It is not perpetuated through malice or nationalistic ambition alone, but also through a consuming passion to keep alive the glory of ancient

Greece, which the modern Greek jealously protects as his birthright. So, if community discipline within NATO erodes, there is the chance that Greece will elect independent action--even in the face of international disapproval.

The twin issues of minorities within Greece and the Greek diaspora have run as consistently and as pervasively throughout Greek history as they do throughout today's newspaper headlines. One of the most important reasons for the persistent prominence of the dispute over minorities is the importance of the Greek Orthodox Church in the hearts, minds and history of the Greek people. The popular mood and potential for conflict is as readily observed in the Greek reaction to today's Macedonian and Northern Epirus questions as in official actions of the church and government centuries ago.

On every side, as seen from Athens, there are problems. To the north is a rapidly spreading crisis in the Balkans, poor relations with Albania over illegal immigration and the Vorio Epirus question, and the conflict over Macedonia. To the east and north-east lie the always antagonistic interests of Turkey, and the unpredictable pattern of development of the ex-Communist states. Further south lies Cyprus, and the possibility of some future crisis on the troubled island which still has not seen a satisfactory conclusion to its central dilemma. From the west come questions of Greece's role in the New Europe with its single market and Maastricht commitments.

The 1990's for Greece are likely to mean a rediscovery of itself as a Balkan country and a greater distancing from external influences, especially

under the newly-elected Prime Minister. Throughout his 1993 campaign, as in his previous campaigns, he compared Greece to the underdeveloped third-world countries, claiming that Greece has more in common with them than with the Western states. This thinking is bound to exert a significant influence on Greece's interaction with the rest of the world.

Certainly, the Greeks will not develop any love for the Turks. They have hated them for so long that the response is nearly Pavlovian in Greece. Yet Turkey, it seems, has moved beyond the ancient enmities. Turkey may posture and maneuver in ways which irritate Greece, but losing a fight at the cost of loss of pride would not devastate the Turks as it would the Greeks. The Greek rivalry, a Turk might explain, is a thing of the past. The Greeks have internalized and institutionalized their malice in a way that their enemy has not.

Mr. Papandreau has every reason to expect that his constituency would support him in any steps he takes toward expansion in the name of the Great Idea, of self-defense, or even of preventive aggression. The Greeks pride themselves on being clever and on being able to recognize as well as capitalize on an opportunity. If Albania becomes more of a problem, or Skopje evaporates--or worse, solidifies--and the international community does not rally behind Greece as Greece feels it is their responsibility to do, it is quite possible that the Greeks will feel the need to act on latent nationalistic ideals. The Greeks would view this not as aggression, but as a move made toward justice or self-defense--and toward the all-encompassing end of self-preservation.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Greeks are critically important players in the Balkan arena. Greece is a member of the key institutions of European security, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU--formerly the European Community), and is a major participant in the Balkan crisis which threatens to turn into a third Balkan war. It is vital that the international community gains at least a rudimentary understanding of the domestic context of this ancient fledgling--ancient in historical outlook and significance, yet politically neophytic--in order to precipitate and understand the potential for future Balkan crises.

The premise of this paper is that the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα*, or "Great Idea," which is at the origin of modern Greek nationalism, is still alive and well in the hearts and minds of modern Greeks. The "Idea" was to regain lands which formerly belonged to the Greek empire. The current Greek government's official line disavows any of these expansionist views, and has done so continually since the early 1950's. This study will show that the "Idea" is not really dead. So, as community discipline within NATO erodes, there is indeed the chance that Greece will elect independent action--even in the face of international disapproval.

As the importance of the domestic political roots of foreign policy is becoming increasingly evident, study of those roots has become one of the most readily accepted ways of acquiring insights into underlying motivations of states. It is increasingly true that, "the consciousness of the interdependence of national and international life [is] pervasive."[1]

Domestically, Greece is in a state of flux. Having elected to power a socialist Prime Minister, the aging Andreas Papandreau, as recently as 10 October 1993, it is difficult to predict with certainty the direction domestic politics will take. But it is possible that Mr. Papandreau's rhetoric will not espouse increasing Greece's level of international cooperation any more than it did in 1981, when he was last elected to power. Fortunately for the international community, his rhetoric, at that time, did not consistently match his deeds (as when "Our Andreas" was elected on a platform which included ejection of the United States military from Greece, followed by his signature on further base agreements with the United States). This is likely to be the case again, especially after Greece assumes the European Union presidency in January 1994.

This paper discusses the twin issues of minorities within Greece and the Greek diaspora, issues which have run as consistently and as pervasively

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[1]James Rosenau, *The Adaptation of National Societies: A Theory of Political System Transformation* (New York: McCaleb-Seiler Publishers, 1970), p. 1.

throughout Greek history as they do throughout today's newspaper headlines. One of the most integral reasons for the persistent prominence of the dispute over minorities is the importance of the Greek Orthodox Church in the hearts, minds and history of the Greek people. The often-institutionalized problems of ethnic or religious Greek minorities and minorities in Greece will be presented, especially in terms of their effects on the formation of Greek foreign policy during this century. The popular mood and potential for conflict is as readily observed in the Greek reaction to today's Macedonian and Northern Epirus questions as in official actions of the church and government centuries ago. These critical and deeply-rooted issues are analyzed for findings which help in understanding Greek foreign policy in the Balkan crisis and in the age-old and ongoing conflict with Turkey.

The first step toward understanding how a people react to external stimuli, however, is understanding not only how they view personalities and events foreign to themselves, but also how they view themselves. In this area, study of the nationalism of a people is most instructive. A brief discussion of Greek nationalism is thus an appropriate introduction to the question of how Greece's domestic environment affects its foreign policy.

II. THE CHARACTER OF GREEK NATIONALISM

Nationalism is a political force which has been at least as important in shaping the history of Europe and the world over the last two centuries as the ideas of freedom and parliamentary democracy or of communism; arguably more so. The roots of modern nationalism are to be found in late eighteenth-century Western Europe and North America--roots from which it grew prodigiously. According to German historian Friedrich Meinecke, socialism and nationalism were the two "main currents of thought of the nineteenth century."[2]

The definition of this pervasive force, however, is elusive. Is it emancipation or oppression? Is it a danger, a restriction on liberty, a threat to the very survival of a people, or is it the embodiment of hopes for a free and just social order, liberation from political and social discrimination? There have been those who argued that *nationalism* as such does not even exist, only a multitude of manifestations of the idea of nationalism.[3]

For purposes of this study, a force which will be referred to as *nationalism* is assumed to exist. This force will be defined and manipulated, for purposes

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[2]*Ibid.*

[3]See Peter Alter, *Nationalism* (New York: Edward Arnold, 1985), chapter 1.

of this study, as that popular or individual sentiment which places the nation upon the highest pedestal, the nation's value residing in its capacity as a binding agency of meaning and justification. Nations, in this context, are the building blocks of humanity. When a time or situation calls for a declaration of loyalty, it is the nation to which an individual will be loyal. National interests, therefore, provide the yardsticks of political thought and action.

The current hotbed of insecurity and potential explosion in the Balkans renders study of the nations in that area highly relevant and timely. While the contributions of the ancient Hellenes to civilization as a whole are well-understood, how the future of Balkan politics will unfold, and what part Greece will play, is uncertain. Wherever the events of the coming years lead, it is certain that Greek nationalism is likely to play a significant part. Although Greece is often viewed as a land of individuals who are prone to, and thrive on, diversity and dissention, the Greeks can conjure a devotional intensity rarely rivalled when their sacred lands or history are endangered, as they have done in support of what they view as their sovereign right over the word, "Macedonia," for example.

What follows is a discussion of the character of modern Greek nationalism as shaped by history--ethnicity, religion and foreign influences--and by modern-day concerns, as introductory background material on which to build the true concern of this paper.

A. TOWARD A TYPOLOGY

Peter Alter has suggested that there exist two main groups or basic types of nationalism--risorgimento and integral.[4] He defines the first of these as:

> ...an emancipatory political force that accompanies the liberation both of new social strata within an existing, formerly absolutest western European state, and of a people that has grown conscious of itself in opposition to a transnational ruling power in east-central Europe. The ultimate goal of Risorgimento nationalism...is liberation from political and social oppression.[5]

Integral nationalism, Alter continues, stands

> ...In complete contrast to Risorgimento nationalism, which proceeds from the notion that all nationalisms and the claims of all national movements are equal, integral nationalism defines the one nation as the Absolute...The nation that proves itself as the strongest and fittest in a hostile and competing world shall gain the upper hand and ultimately survive.[6]

If one accepts the existence of these two typologies of nationalism, it appears that the nationalism most representative of the Greeks is of the Risorgimento sort. Yet, the influence of integral nationalism certainly cannot be dismissed. In officially denying the existence of "lesser" minorities within Greece and in keeping alive a spirit which espouses Greece's right and duty to take for itself all that is available, territorially or morally, the Greek state personifies integral nationalism. Certainly, supreme love of the homeland and belief in its superiority over all others must be the basis for ideas of "enosis"

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[4]For a complete discussion and case studies on the main types of nationalism, see Alter, *op. cit.*

[5]Alter, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

[6]Alter, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

(*ένωσις*--reunification of Greece with Cyprus) and the "megali idea" (*το Μεγάλη Ιδέα*--the Greek version of "manifest destiny" or "mission civilitrize").

Still, the Greek people always seem to be fighting for "a just cause," and wanting only to redeem that which has gone astray, or regain what they have lost and feel they rightfully deserve. Greek nationalism has fueled, "a protest movement against an existing system of political domination, against a state which destroys the nation's traditions and prevents it flourishing,"[7] using as justification the right of every nation, and of each member of a nation, to autonomous development. In the collective Greek mind, individual freedom and national independence are closely connected. Thus, the declaration issued before the Greek National Assembly on 27 January 1822 (a declaration which would be written into the Greek Constitution) read:

> This war...is not aimed at the advantage of any single part of the Greek people; it is a national war, a holy war, a war the object of which is to reconquer...the rights which the civilized people of Europe, our neighbours, enjoy today; rights of which the cruel and unheard of tyranny of the Ottomans would deprive us--us alone--and the very memory of which they would stifle in our hearts.[8]

The Greeks continually believe themselves persecuted by nearly everyone, especially their arch-rival, Turkey. In a Greek journal which presents a self-proclaimed "rounded and enlightening report touching upon the distinctive

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[7]Alter, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[8]Printed in Hans Kohn, ed., *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History*, 2nd edition (Princeton, NJ: 1965), pp. 116-7.

characteristics of a country which is often the source of tension in its region," it is evident that the Greek view of Turkey is one of the "'spoiled child' of the West."[9] The journal, which pictures on its cover a symbolically Turkish hammer and sickle on top of an American flag, rumpled on the ground, continues with, "Turkish propaganda has been trying, yet again, and in a manner lacking in any finesse, to distort reality by adjusting it to its appetites and plans for expansion, at the same time completely ignoring any concept of law."[10]

The Greek fixation on a negative relationship with Turkey is highly evident in official communications. For instance, in a September 1993 speech delivered in Monterey, California, to Greek and American graduate students by Mr. Elias Clis, the Greek Consul General in San Francisco since 1992, the emphasis on matters Turkish is so profound that in a one-hour lecture on "Greece and the Balkan Crisis," twenty minutes were devoted to Turkey. These twenty minutes were filled with phrases such as, "Muslim steamroller," "Islamization of society," "[Turkish] problem of identity with Europe," "[Turkish] desire for position of preponderance," and "militant Islamism."

Interestingly, when the speech turned at last to the concerns of other Balkan states, such as Bosnia, Mr. Clis claimed that Greece maintained, "...as

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[9]"The Turkish Factor in View of New Circumstances," *Athena--Monthly Review of International Affairs*, volume 49 (September 1991), p. 265.

[10]"Turkey Stirs Up More Trouble," *Athena*, p. 273.

much sympathy for Muslims as Serbs...," warned against "selective outrage," and made recurring comparisons to the Cyprus dilemma. In citing historical identification with Serbia, Mr. Clis apologized for Milosevic, but warned that there would be no peace without "equilibrium."

B. THE ORIGINS OF MODERN GREEK NATIONALISM

1. Historical Basis

Although modern Greek nationalism is a derivative of the emergence of Greece as an independent nation-state in the early nineteenth century, its origins go back further in history. It is related to the rise of nationalism and of nation-states in seventeenth-century Western Europe and was affected by the interaction of European and Ottoman international politics.[11] It was reflexive in character, a symptom of four hundred years of Turkish occupation followed by the expansion of a new ideology.

As early as the late thirteenth century, Greek literature holds statements such as that which was addressed to the Emperor Manual II Palaeologus (1350-1425) by George Gemistus: "We, over whom you rule, are

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[11]Stephen G. Xydis, "Modern Greek Nationalism," *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, Peter F. Sugar and Ivo J. Lederer, eds. (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1971), p. 207.

Hellenes by race, as evinced by our language and ancestral education."[12] If belief in a common descent, regardless of whether an objective blood relationship exists or not, may be one of the characteristics of an ethnic group,[13] then it is justifiable to discern in the thought of Gemistus an early sign of Greek nationalism.

Εθνος is the contemporary Greek word for "nation." When the initial "*E*" is pridefully capitalized, this word stands for the nation *par excellence*, the Greek nation. At the time of the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence, however, literary sources indicate that this word was seldom used. Another word, *γένος*, was most popular in discussion of the nation at that time. *Γένος* is most precisely defined as "race," "stock," "offspring," "kin" or "origin,"[14] revealing the deepening historical consciousness and pride of the Greeks of those times in their ancestors, whom they believed to be the ancient Greeks.[15] A neoclassicism of sorts is evidenced in the early nineteenth

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[12]S. Lambros, *Palaeologan and Peloponnesian Matters*, volume 3 (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 246.

[13]For a discussion of the bases of social groups, the unit of nationalism, see Max Weber, "Types of Social Organization," T. Parsons, E. Shils, D. Naegele and J. R. Pitts, eds., *Theories of Society* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1965).

[14]G. C. Divry and C. G. Divry, eds., *Divry's New English-Greek and Greek-English Handy Dictionary* (New York: D.C. Divry, Inc., 1964), p. 296.

[15]In ancient Greek, the word "*έθνος*" means a number of people living together, a nation, a tribe, even a trading association. Only six additional entries in Liddell and Scott's ancient Greek dictionary are connected with this noun either as adjectives or as composite nouns. In modern dictionaries, however, there are not only the above definitions but also fifteen or more

century in the practice of renaming even common village children after the great figures of Greek lore. Commenting on the subject of name-changing at that time, Ali Pasa, the Lion of Ioannina, observed: "You Greeks have something big in your minds. You no longer christen your children '*Γιάννης* (John),' '*Πέτρος* (Peter)' or '*Κωνσταντίνος* (Constantinos)', but '*Λεωνίδας* (Leonidas),' '*Θεμιστοκλής* (Themistocles),' '*Αριστιδής* (Aristides).' What are you cooking up now?"[16]

The Greek language, as any other, tended to establish a discrete communications circuit which contributed to the cohesion of the people--both elite and masses--who spoke it, and contributed to their corresponding sense of separateness from those who did not. Within the Ottoman Empire, the Greek-speaking element or subpopulation constituted a broad, loose network that extended beyond the empire's confines to the Greeks of the diaspora, who had fled to the West with Constantinople's fall or who settled there later as traders.[17]

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additional entries connected with this noun, such as *εθνικισμός* (nationalism), *εθνικοποιώ* (nationalize), *εθνικτόνος* (ethnocidal or genocidal). This tends to indicate that Greek ethnocentrism is a modern, not an ancient, phenomenon.

[16]K. T. Dimaras, *The History of Modern Greek Literature* (Athens, 1947), p. 164.

[17]D. J. Gianakopoulos, *Greek Scholars in Venice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 280-281.

2. Basis in Religion

A more extensive but less homogeneous bond within the Ottoman Empire lay in common religious values, those of Eastern or Greek Orthodoxy. This circuit, though looser than that of the language because of greater numbers, and less cohesive because of the inability to communicate easily via a common system of codification, was organized and institutionalized with a Greek-speaking Patriarchate, situated in Constantinople, at its head. Its hierarchy tended to regard itself as the guardian of the Greek Orthodox flock against encroachments by both Ottoman Turks and Latins. Various restrictions on the performance of religious duties as well as the imposition of a head tax contributed to the maintenance of a separateness of the "people of the book (Bible)" from the Muslims.

One of the most obvious links between Orthodoxy and the Greek state may be found in the period of Ottoman occupation. When Mehmed II conquered Constantinople in 1453, he brought an end to the secular power of the Greek Empire, but he allowed ecclesiastical authority to take its place. As Islamic law divided peoples according to religion, not nationality, the Greek subjects of the Sultan were put into a *millet*, a nation, with the Patriarch at its head. Thus was forged the bond between the official Greek religion and the official Greek state. The Church and its Greek population generally enjoyed security and toleration, as long as they accepted Ottoman sovereignty. In return for the privileges it enjoyed, the Church hierarchy had to accept

incorporation into the administration of the Turkish state. When that bureaucracy became subject to increasing corruption after Suleiman's reign, the Greek church shared in the decline.

The early seventeenth-century Greek was imbued with a spirit that recognized the new superiority of the West but found solace in the thought of the "glory that was Greece." Greek writers of the diaspora, or those living in territories that had escaped Ottoman conquest, directed their thoughts to the fate of their correligionists who had come under the rule of Islam. In the process they produced stereotypes concerning national character. Yet, it was the idea of Christian against Muslim, rather than Greek against Turk, which maintained the wall of separation between conqueror and conquered, and gave rise to compositions of indignant lament. Frangiskos Skoufos, a Roman Catholic propagandist born in Crete in 1644, composed a prayer calling upon "Christ, liberator of all the world," eventually to liberate the *γένος*, from the slavery of the Hagarenes. "Until when," the prayer exclaims, "shall a *γένος* as glorious and noble have to prostrate itself before the godless turban?"[18] Elias Miniatis (1669-1714), who lived in Venice-held Greece, addressed a similar prayer to the Virgin Mary: "Until when, oh Immaculate Virgin, shall the thrice-miserable *γένος* of the Greeks remain in shackles of incredible slavery?"[19]

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[18]*Modern Greek Literature*, pp. 100-101.

[19]*Ibid.*, p. 114.

This nurturing of the hope for freedom from Muslim domination went hand in hand with Catholic propaganda and stimulated a sense of continuity between pre-Christian and post-Byzantine Hellenism, spreading faith in the descent from ancient Greeks among the people of the enslaved *γένος*.

The majority of Greek revolutionaries who took up arms against Turkish rule in 1821 were closely linked to Orthodoxy and devoted to its traditions. They believed they were fighting as much for their Christian faith as for political freedom, and regarded the struggle to drive out the Turks as a holy war against Islam. So When the 1821 revolution broke out in the Peloponnesus and Alexander Ipsilantis invaded the Principalities in the name of freedom for the Christian Balkan peoples, the Greek church was forced to respond. In Constantinople, the Patriarch officially disavowed the action and excommunicated its supporters, fearing the consequences of an uprising whose success was extremely doubtful. Nevertheless, the Patriarch and several of his bishops, as well as Orthodox officials and local Christian prelates throughout the Ottoman world, fell to Turkish vengeance.

The reaction of the religious leaders outside of Constantinople, however, was often quite different from that officially expressed by the Church. Many village priests, being natural leaders in their communities, enthusiastically joined the armies which sought the expulsion of the Turks.

In December 1821, a constitution containing, as its very first article, a statement that the Orthodox Church was the established religion of the Greek

state, was produced. It also formed a Ministry of Religion. However, the forces of secular nationalism were already at work in that the assembly divested the bishops of the judicial authority which they enjoyed under Ottoman regime.[20]

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the boundaries of the Church had been expanded along with those of the state. In 1881, Thessaly and a part of Epirus were turned over to Greece as a result of the Russo-Turkish war, and the Holy Synod of Athens took over the administration of the churches there. Apostolos Makrakis, a man with intense devotion to Orthodoxy, chose this moment of expanding influence to begin a personal crusade to improve the religious life of the Greek people. He founded a school to propagate his principles and attacked the Church from within. He exposed three bishops as having received their appointment due to bribes in 1875, and was forced into exile by the Church in retaliation. His school was closed by Church officials.

The early twentieth century was marked by a number of significant events for the religious life of the country. Perhaps most notable was the arrival of Eleftherios Venizelos on the scene in 1910. His activities would eventually split the clergy of Greece as they did the nation into those who

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[20]Charles Frazee, "Church and State in Greece," John T. A. Koumoulides, ed., *Greece in Transition* (London: Zeno Booksellers and Publishers, 1977), pp. 129-30.

supported and those who opposed him. Most prominent churchmen sided with the King in the conflict between Venizelos and King Constantine over Greek participation in World War I, and a public ceremony of excommunication took place in Athens, led by Archbishop Theoklitos, who declared, "Cursed be Eleftherios Venizelos who puts priests into prison and rises up against his King and his nation."[21]

In December 1923, the same month the Holy Synod adopted the new Gregorian calendar for Greece, Archbishop Chrystomos called for broader reforms in a letter to the Minister of Religion. He demanded that the present Holy Synod be abolished and the government free the Church from its dependence on the state. Before the end of the year, a new constitution was established for the Church. In the future, the power of the civil government would be severely limited in interfering with church affairs. This new constitution, however, was repealed by the Generals in 1925 and a government-led Synod was reestablished.

More than just an outlet for the frustrations of the Greek soul, the Greek Orthodox Church played a significant part in the governing of an oft-suppressed people. The Orthodox church is referred to in the Constitution as the "prevailing" or "established" religion of the country and thus gains certain privileges and obligations. Proselytization by other religious groups is forbidden

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[21] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

under the Constitution, but the fundamental law neither expressly defines "proselytization" nor enforces this prohibition. The Church is dependent on the government for financial and legal support--the state pays the clergy, subsidizes the church budget, and administers its property. The government lends support through indirect taxes for church purposes, requires religious education at the primary and secondary levels, and also subsidizes higher religious education. In return, the church is supervised by the Ministry of National Education and Religion. The Government announced its official intention to separate church and state in 1981, but, over a decade later, the implications still are not clear. Still, for centuries the village priest has been the preserver of Greek culture and religious traditions, and as such he has been generally respected by villagers.

The Greek Orthodox Church is heir to a cultural tradition of vast antiquity and strength. It has inherited much of the psychology and the attitudes of the theocratic Byzantine world, down to one of the Patriarch's many titles, that of archbishop of the "New Rome." Yet, the central dilemma of Orthodoxy today is a result of geography--a pervasive theme in Greek history. Quite simply, the head of the Greek Church is not in Greece, and, according to Ottoman statutes still in force, the candidacy is limited to those of Turkish nationality. Although the Greek Orthodox church is culturally strong in Greece (to be "really" Greek is to be Orthodox), it is a church without a home in its own nation. Distressingly to its members, the pool of strong, intelligent, Greek, Turkish-born leaders from which the Patriarchs are drawn is

dwindling, due to the rise of secularism and the movement of Greeks out of Turkey in response to persistent persecution of that minority. "There is an unmistakable impression of a church and culture being slowly strangled by Turkish bureaucracy and cultural repression."[22]

3. Ottoman Occupation

When Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, the Orthodox Greeks initially welcomed the Muslim Ottomans, finding them less offensive religiously than the Roman Catholics. However, the Ottoman occupation closed access to Europe and imposed strict isolation on Greece. For the next three hundred years, little of not happened while Greece settled into patterns of subjugation.

As early as 1480, armed resistance to harsh Ottoman taxes arose in the mountainous areas. *Klephts*, or bandits, attacked tax collectors and other Ottoman authorities in what Richard Clogg has called "a primitive form of national resistance."[23] Though indistinguishable from those of common bandits, their exploits were recorded in ballads and became a part of the carefully-preserved folklore, helping to inspire nationalist rebellion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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[22]James Pettifer, *"The Greeks"* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 114-5.

[23]Cited in Rinn S. Shinn, *Greece: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: The American University, 1986), p. 16.

One of the most prominent groups of Greek-speaking elites within the Ottoman empire was the traders. By the end of the eighteenth century, for example, Thessaloniki-centered trade, which dominated the Balkans and extended to Venice, Germany, Austria, Poland, and Hungary was largely in Greek hands.[24] Thus, a commercial bourgeoisie was emerging and becoming an important factor in the growth of Greek nationalism. Its dissatisfaction with the Ottoman economic system tended to strengthen the sense of separateness that incited national consciousness and stimulated the formation of mutually negative attitudes and stereotypes.

Other elite subgroups also came to the fore, including shipowners on the islands of the Aegean as well as landowners in the Peloponnese. Unequal systems of taxation and distribution of privileges and income naturally produced in the Greek element of the Ottoman empire widespread discontent with the inequity and injustice of fiscal and social policies toward the Greek-speaking peoples.[25]

Despite centuries of Ottoman rule, a Greek "nation" survived, but it was difficult to define clearly. Because self-identified Greeks could be found around the globe, geographical definitions were inadequate. Although the

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[24]N. G. Svoronos, *The Commerce of Salonika* (Athens: 1954), pp. 354-356.

[25]M. Sakellariou, *The Peloponnese During the Second Turkish Domination, 1715-1821* (Athens: 1939), pp. 224-225.

Greek language had not been challenged, many of those who considered themselves Greek no longer spoke Greek, having adopted the language of their new homes. The Orthodox religion, therefore, became the principal criteria for determining Greek nationality, and the Ottoman Empire was divided into nations accordingly.

By the mid-eighteenth century a nationalist movement was emerging, and its first stirrings were a cultural revival. The church itself increasingly came under criticism because of its corruption and open collaboration with the Turks. The resultant secularization opened Greece up to new ideas, and the Greeks began relearning, to their surprise, that their own history (neglected in Greece because of the church's policy), was considered the touchstone of Western civilization. By the time of the late-eighteenth-century revolutionary ferment throughout Europe, Greece was ready to consider seriously the possibility of revolt.

4. War for Independence

Transforming the sentiments and normative ideas of nationalism into the institutional reality of a state required, as in the case of other revolutionary movements of an ethnocentric character, something more than the expression of agitational ideas and feelings by highly visible members of various unorganized elites. It called for revolutionary organization, revolutionary deeds, and the creation of an embryonic governmental apparatus. In Greece, the period

of 1814-1830 witnessed the emergence of these three types of organized activities.[26]

Five constitutions, enacted from 1822 through 1833 were not only living symbols of the aspirations of the *γένος* to become an *έθνος*; they also served as a framework for the government of a nation in revolt. One of them included the basic juridicopolitical concept of nationalism that sovereignty resides in the people.[27] The identical preambles of the first two provisional Greek constitutions were the equivalent of declarations of independence. They sought to justify the "national struggle" in terms of natural rights as well as in those of a conflict between Christians and Muslims.

> The Greek Nation...declares today...its political existence and independence.
>
> Our war against the Turks, far from being based on demagogic and rebellious principles or on any selfish interests of a part only of the entire Hellenic Nation, is a national war, a sacred war, the only motive of which is the recovery of our rights of personal freedom, of property, and of honor...
>
> Motivated by such principles of natural rights and desirous of becoming similar to the rest of our Christian brothers, we have started a war against the Turks...having decided to succeed in our purpose and to rule ourselves with just laws or to be wholly lost.[28]

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[26]Stephen G. Xydis, *Greece and the Great Powers, 1944-1947* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1963), p. 75.

[27]G. K. Aspreas, *The Political History of Modern Greece, 1821-1928* (Athens: Sideris Publishers, 1930), p. 63.

[28]A. Mamoukas, *Matters Pertaining to the Rebirth of Greece* (Athens: 1852), p. 201.

During the Greek War of Independence, the nationalist spirit was expressed mainly in deeds, not words. An there was a fundamental difference between those who wanted to pursue the war using the traditional *klephtic* methods of guerrilla warfare while relying on religious fervor as the motivating force and those who preferred the European model and were motivated by a conscious nationalism. Frustrated by insufficient territorial gains and unsatisfactory border agreements, even with the assistance of the European Powers (or, perhaps, because of this assistance) the stage was set for the integration of territorial acquisition as an official part of Greek foreign policy.

5. The Great Idea

From 1830, when emergent Greek nationalism attained its first objective, the setting up of a state in territory freed from Ottoman rule, until almost a century later, Greek nationalism in a new irredentist, expansionist, state-based guise was symbolized in the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα* (the Great Idea). The first U.S. Minister to Athens, Charles K. Tuckerman, described it as follows:

> ...The Great Idea means that the Greek mind is to regenerate the East--that it is the destiny of Hellenism to Hellenize that vast stretch of territory which by natural law the Greeks believe to be theirs, and which is chiefly inhabited by people claiming to be descended from Hellenic stock, professing the Orthodox or Greek faith, or speaking the Greek language.[29]

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[29]C. K. Tuckerman, *The Greeks of Today* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1878), p. 120.

This exalted notion of pan-Hellenism, the Greek equivalent of "Manifest Destiny," of "the white man's burden," or of the "Third Rome" found its expression in the writings of historians and educators of the time and was incorporated into the popular Greek notion of the role of the Greek nation-state in civilized society.

Throughout the hundred-odd years of its life, the nationalist spirit of the Great Idea naturally underwent several changes in response to the course of the Eastern Question and developments in Balkan history. At the time of the Crimean War it assumed an interesting noncommittal character. At that time, some Greeks saw themselves as belonging neither to the West nor to the East, but participating with both. It was observed in the mid-1800's that, "A Greek feels equally at home in Paris and in Moscow...The Greek will never cease being Orthodox and considering Russia as his brother, [yet] the Greek...will never cease being a friend of freedom and of the science of the West and will look to the West...with admiration and love."[30]

6. Interwar Greek Nationalism

The Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 not only delimited the political boundaries of modern Greece along lines still holding good today except for the addition of the Dodecanese by the Italian Peace Treaty of 1947, but removed from the Great Idea most of its solid irredentist core. The ethnic homogeneity of both Greece and neighboring Turkey were greatly increased by the exchange of populations of those nations, constituting the basis for the development of new manifestations of

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[30]"The Greek Society," *Le Spectateur d'Orient*, volume I (1853), pp. 36-37.

nationalism, nationalist pride and nationalist aspirations. The most remarkable feature of the new spirit of Greek nationalism in the interwar period, however, was a conscious (though unsuccessful) effort to close the long chapter of Greek-Turkish hostility. The Young Turks, in fact, had "wondered whether the Greek element in the Ottoman Empire might not eventually come to exercise a condominium with the Turks in a great Anatolian empire."[31]

During the 1930's, the term *φυλή*, "race," tends to be stressed. It was believed by members of the intelligentsia that the purpose of education in Greece, especially of primary education, should be to educate not human beings, but Greeks. Ioannes Metaxas wrote in 1935 (before his dictatorial reign):

> Let us not delude ourselves. "Men" exist only zoologically. Psychically, however, they are "Greeks," "French," "British," "Germans," "Bulgars," etc. Each man sees life, thinks, and acts as a function of his nationality, his race. Raciality is a physiological phenomenon. Greek youth must understand this in order to find its way.[32]

7. After World War II

World War II and its immediate aftermath brought not only material disasters but also new elements of national pride and new national symbols. This period of schizoid nationalism reflected the pattern of international politics in a bipolar world and the conflicts that are still occurring as developments in eastern Europe on both sides

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[31] "Who Killed the Megali Idea?," *Greek Themes*, volume Xi, number 5 (May 1966), p. 281.

[32] *The Personal Diary of Ioannis Metaxas* (Athens: Ikaros Publishers, 1960), p. 611.

of what used to be called the Iron Curtain suggest. The internal and external debates over the peace settlement after the second World War testified to the strong flare-up of externally directed nationalism that, some of Greece's Western friends felt, was detrimental to the urgent national goals of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The militantly pro-western political world that finally prevailed in Greece, after the struggle from 1946 to 1949 to suppress the Communist-led rebellion, left its imprint on the Greek Constitution which was promulgated on 01 January 1952. For instance, the new constitution dispensed with the provisions of the 1927 constitution requiring specification of the circumstances under which public meetings could be banned (article 10), placed several new restrictions on freedom of the press (article 16), and added "internal danger" to the contingencies when a "state of siege" could be declared, omitting an express provision of the 1927 document according to which the jurisdiction of miitary courts set up after the declaration of a "state of siege" should have no retroactive effect (article 91).

Judged by the standards of Greek democracy at the time, the 1952 constitution was a fairly liberal document. But, alongside it and in contradiction to its most basic principles, there existed a complete system of decrees, laws, and police regulations, both preventive and punitive, enacted during 1947-49. While these had been expressly limited "to the duration of this emergency," at the time of the 1952 constitution the "emergency legislation" was confirmed and was maintained until

1974 under the *fictio juris* of "the continuing aggression."[33] Traditional values of nationalism were shaped and given new dignity in response to a bipolar world situation, stimulated by the Cold War and its attendant fear of communism. The values of the Greek heritage were now seen as part of the Greco-Roman-Judaic culture[34] and Greek national pride tended to focus on these cultural values.

C. TODAY'S GREEK NATIONALISM

The nationalism of today's Greeks is nothing if not vehement. They have a poignant realization of their precarious position between the Balkans and Western Europe. More than one Greek official has echoed the concern that, "We are not looking out simply for Greek interests, but for the...interest of stability in the Balkans. [Among the NATO and EC nations] we are the country that loses everything if the situation disintegrates into a Lebanon."[35] The Greeks retain a broad uneasiness about their security and harbor serious concerns about being marginalized. International disputes which cut the Greeks off from their European partners aggravate nagging Greek fears that they may be viewed as more Balkan than West European. Still, Greece is a strong democracy in the troubled Balkan region, and it is striving to

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[33]Yanis Yanoulopoulos, "Greece: Political and Constitutional Developments 1924-1974," John T. A. Koumoulides, *Op. cit.*, pp. 81-2.

[34]Xydis, *Greece and the Great Powers 1944-1947*, p. 522.

[35]Howard LaFranchi, "Greeks Unite in Opposition to Independent Macedonia," *Christian Science Monitor* (24 June 1992), p. 4.

enhance its position as a channel for democratic principles and economic development.

III. THE QUESTION OF MINORITIES

"Greece, as its Constitution requires, is determined to ensure equality of civic and legal rights for all the inhabitants of Thrace, Christians and Moslems alike."[36] These are the words of Konstantinos Mitsotakis, Greece's Prime Minister, spoken in northern Greece on 13 May 1991. Aside from the literal significance of the statement itself, these words from the nation's leader indicate fairly clearly that minority concerns are drawn on religious lines. When a man calls himself Greek, very rarely is the "Orthodox" not implied. To be Greek is to be Orthodox--over 97% of Greece's population is associated with that faith. The president of the republic must be Orthodox, and is sworn in according to church rites. State holidays and ceremonies are synchronized with religious holidays. The day that the Greeks refused to capitulate to Benito Mussolini in 1940 is classified in a catechism book as a religious holiday.[37]

While Mr. Mitsotakis, in the speech quoted above, does go on to define the Moslem minority as consisting of three distinct ethnic groups--Turks, Pomacs and Gypsies--their ethnicity is clearly of secondary importance. It is an individual's religious beliefs which the Greeks hold to be of prime importance

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[36]"Prime Minister Mitsotakis Pledges Full Equality Under the Law for Greece's Moslem Minority" (Washington, D.C.: Embassy of Greece Press and Information Office, 1991), p. 1.

[37]Rinn S. Shinn, *Greece: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: American University Foreign Area Studies, 1986), p. 109-111.

in defining loyalties. In fact, efforts to delineate ethnic differences within Greece are firmly resisted by the Greek government. Turkish accusations of minority mistreatment in Greece are regularly interpreted by the Greeks as attempts "to alter the religious nature of the Minority to that of an ethnic minority to be used as an instrument in the exercise of political racial strife within Greece."[38]

A. THE LAUSANNE SETTLEMENT

While the possibilities of foreign entanglements in twentieth-century Greece were diminished by the elimination of the Great Idea as the primary official consideration in Greek politics (see Chapter IV), under the provisions of the Lausanne settlement of 1923, Greece lost to Turkey all that it had obtained by the defunct treaty of Sèvres (the Smyrna enclave in Asia Minor, all of eastern Thrace, and the Aegean islands of Imbros and Tenedos). Arguably more important than the loss of territory was the agreement for a compulsory exchange of population, contained in a separate convention signed at Lausanne on 30 January 1923 by Greece and Turkey. The agreement called for the evacuation of all Turkish Muslims from Greece, except those in western Thrace, and for the removal of all Greek Christians from Turkey, except those in

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[38]"Recent Developments in Western Thrace and Some Observations on Documents and Statements Circulated by the Turkish Government" (Washington, D.C.: Embassy of Greece Press and Information Office, 1991), p. 9.

Constantinople (Istanbul), Imbros and Tenedos. The areas exempt from the exchange contained about 100,000 Turks and Greeks respectively.[39]

The result of the convention was that Turkey received some 400,000 Muslim refugees, while Greece absorbed about 1,300,000 Christians. With one stroke of the pen, the century-old drive of the Greeks for the city of Constantinople and for the historic lands of Hellenism in Asia Minor were undermined. At the same time, the population exchange significantly increased the percentage of Greeks in Greek Macedonia and western Thrace, where most of the Greek refugees were settled. The Greek-Turkish exchange of minorities and an earlier Greek-Bulgarian population exchange of smaller proportions considerably improved the political security of Greece's northern provinces. The exchanges gave Greece lingustic and ethnic homogeneity, reducing its minorities to less than six percent of the total population of 5,820,000.[40]

B. MINORITIES WITHIN GREECE

The highest goal the Greeks have ever hoped to attain with regard to minorities in Greece is "separate, but equal." The Greeks laud their own efforts at improving the level of the Moslem Teachers' Training College to equal that of the Teachers' Academies for the majority of Christian Greeks. "The

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[39]Harry J. Psomiades, *The Eastern Question: The Last Phase. A Study in Greek-Turkish Diplomacy* (Thessaloniki: 1968), pp. 105-108.

[40]Couloumbis, Petropulos and Psomiades, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-81.

government," said Prime Minister Mitsotakis on 14 May 1991, "is determined to enable Moslem children...to graduate from *their* high schools on their way to higher educational studies in colleges and universities (emphasis added)."[41] No mention is made of integrating Moslem and Orthodox children toward the goal of increased understanding or cultural enrichment.

The Greek *ξένος*, from which English derives its "xenophobia," means more to the Greeks than simply "foreigner." It also means, "strange," "somebody else's," and "not concerned with."[42] As applied to the *ξένος* in Greece, literal translation is revealing. To be other than Greek is to be less than Greek.

As Greece is not eager even to acknowledge the existence of minorities within its borders, it is difficult to obtain accurate figures on the actual composition of ethnic minorities in Western Thrace. Since 1951, for instance, the Greek census has recorded neither mother tongue nor religious affiliation. Statements that Greece "today is inhabited exclusively by Greeks to a degree of national homogeneousness which is rare throughout the world"[43] are rampant in Greek literature. Indeed, unbiased reports state that as little as two

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[41]"Improved Educational Opportunities for the Moslem Minority" (Washington, D.C.: Embassy of Greece Press and Information Office, 1991), p. 3.

[42]J. T. Pring, *The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Greek* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 132.

[43]Michalis Papakonstantinou, "Existing and Non-existing Minorities," *Greece's Weekly* (Athens: 17 February 1992), p. 14.

percent of Greece's population of over ten million is not Greek--and notes that the Greek government recognizes no ethnic divisions within Greece.[44]

Today, however, even the Greeks must admit that this is changing. Greece has for some time now been a place of refuge for those escaping from Albania--members of the Greek minority who have been welcome as well as a small number of ethnic Albanians who have not. What Greece fears now is large numbers of people of all nationalities escaping from collapsed Yugoslavia into Greece if a civil war should continue to spread.

C. THE GREEK DIASPORA

The Greeks consider their diaspora to be spread across five continents. A Greek journal of international affairs reported that in 1991:

> A rough estimate of the number of those living outside Greece and Cyprus would produce figures of at least two and a half million in North and South America, half a million in Western Europe, one hundred thousand or so in Africa, and close to a million in Australia...[also included are] the few thousand Greeks still living in Turkey, the thousands of Greeks in sourthern Italy, the Greeks of the Black Sea coasts of Bulgaria and Romania...and the half-million or so Greeks of Albania.[45]

While Greeks may neither treat their minorities as equals nor afford them all the benefits of citizenship Orthodox Greeks enjoy, Greeks abroad are not typically welcomed with open arms, or even openly acknowledged, either. For

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[44]*The World Factbook 1991* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1991), pp. 117-118.

[45]"Expatriate Greeks Face a New Age," in Greek, *Athena*, number 41 (Athens: International Studies Association, January 1991), p. 9.

years, Albanian President Enver Hoxha maintained that Albania had less than 59,000 Greeks, but a Central Intelligence Agency report in 1991 put the figure at nearly 270,000, or 8% of Albania's population of about 3.6 million[46]--still short of the Greek claim to 500,000. The Albanian government refuses to allow Greek schools to be opened except where its skewed census figures show the population to be more than 50% Greek, and even then the schools can go only up to fourth grade. The Frankfurt-based International Society for Human Rights alleges that the 15,000 to 25,000 Greeks living in Tirana enjoy no minority rights,[47] and, "on 17 February [1992] in Lisbon, the European Community and its 12 member-states expressed their 'deep concern' over incidents involving the Greek minority in Albania."[48]

D. ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION

Allegations of discrimination against ethnic minorities have played a smaller part in troubled Greek-Turkish relations than t[h] larger questions of the Aegean and of Cyprus. But any general settlement will need to include the

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[46]Frederick Kempe, "Greek-Albanian Border Holds Latest Tensions in Balkan Powderkeg," *The Wall Street Journal* (04 March 1993), p. A3.

[47]*Ibid.*

[48]"EC Condemns Violence Against Greek Minority," in Greek, *Athena*, number 54 (Athens: Institute of International Political and Strategic Studies, February 1992), p. 47.

removal not merely of discrimination but also of any suspicion of discrimination, if the minorities question is not to be material for future discord.

The criterion of the minorities' identity, as previously mentioned, is basically religious. It is therefore technically inaccurate to call them "national minorities," though they are generally referred to as such.

It is believed in Greece that the low minority statistics the government publishes speak for themselves. But one could point out that the increase in the number of Muslims in Thrace is considerably less than would be expected from the minority's high birth-rate, and that large numbers of Muslims have, in fact, either emigrated or gone underground. Such emigration is not necessarily or simply the result of discrimination, however. Other factors causing emigration have been hardships at the hands of both the Bulgarians and the Germans in World War II, and at the hands of Greek guerrillas during the Greek Civil War.[49] Emigration to Turkey could be a natural outcome of ethnic and religious affiliation, or of a belief that Turkish cities provide more opportunities than Greek cities for Turkish-speaking Muslims.

Some difficulties of the Turkish minority in western Thrace arise principally from the land question. Though forming only about thirty-five percent of the population, the Turks, who live largely by agriculture, once held about sixty percent of the land in the are. The Greek authorities have reduced the latter

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[49]Andrew Wilson, *The Aegean Dispute* (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1980), p. 17.

figure to twenty percent, and this has inevitably produced social and economic problems.

Chief among the measures used to achieve this reduction has been the grant of long-term loans at very low interest rates to Greek families who come to settle in the area from other parts of Greece. The loans have been used to acquire Turkish land at what, it should be emphasized, have been quite generous prices. Turkish land has also been requisitioned in some areas for defense purposes. In others, it has been compulsorily purchased for civil projects, such as the university colleges of Western Thrace.

Two other practices alleged by the Turkish minority are said to involve linguistic discrimination. These, if true, would contravene Articles 37-45 of the Treaty of Lausanne, which guarantee Muslims the same civil and political rights as non-Muslims.

The first allegation of discrimination against non-Greek-speakers is in the granting of driving licenses, which are very important for farmers dependent on tractors and farm vehicles. The second is alleged discrimination against Muslims seeking admission to universities, where the medium of instruction is Greek.

While allegations of this nature must be thoroughly investigated before being taken seriously in the midst of an age-old typhoon of propaganda, there are several commonly-cited examples of prejudice which are interesting to note.

For instance, in propaganda disseminated and marked "CONFIDENTIAL" by the Greek embassy in Washington, DC, it is reported that:

> In March 16, 1964, the Turkish government denounces the Greco-Turkish Agreement of Establishment etc., of October 30, 1930, on the ground that it no longer corresponds to circumstances...Turkish authorities started at once to expel Greek nationals on the ground that they were dangerous to the "internal and external" security of the state. Over a thousand Greeks were thus immediately expelled on the basis of lists that...included 6 deceased, 148 persons already established in Greece, 130 over 70 years old, 20 over 80 years old, 4 mental cases, 8 persons partly paralyzed by stroke, 8 hospitalized persons, 3 blind and 2 deaf and dumb.[50]

Also of note is the creative semantics of the above cited sources' assertion that when Turkish "libraries are not allowed to contain Greek books, including textbooks, encyclopedias and dictionaries...The Greek Government takes countermeasures in Western Thrace."[51] The nature of the "countermeasures" is not specified.

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[50]"The Minority Question," manuscript distributed by the Embassy of Greece Press and Information Office, Washington, DC, and dated in Ankara, March 1990.

[51]*Ibid.*

IV. THE GREAT IDEA

The heart of Greek nationalism began beating at the birth of the Greek state in the early nineteenth century. Over two million Greeks who, at the time of the state's creation, were living within Epirus, Thessaly, Macedonia, parts of Anatolia and on the islands surrounding Greece were considered irredentists, meaning, in Greek, "unredeemed." Incorporation of this diaspora, as well as the re-establishment of a Greek empire with Constantinople as its capital, became the keystone of Greece's foreign policy. This policy came to be known as *το Μεγάλη Ιδέα*, or "the Great Idea." Contemplations of the Great Idea and its potentialities were a diversion from the acute and unresolved internal problems of the fledgling state, and lent the Greeks a feeling of "manifest destiny" which was to become an integral part of the national Greek character from the very inception of the Greek state until the early 1920's.

A. BASIS

A discussion of the foreign policy of Greece during its first century of independent statehood should begin with examination of what were and were not Greece's primary goals. Since the Greek state was guaranteed by three major European powers in an international treaty, it may safely be presumed that the territorial integrity of Greece was not in question. The moment of

exception to this assumption proved the rule by demonstrating that a military victor over the Greeks would be deprived of its territorial spoils by the European Great Powers.

Underlying Greek foreign policy, however, were ostensibly purely domestic concerns, such as budget balancing and political stability. In fact, the Greek state often arranged its relations with the foreign powers in such a way as to meet these two basic problems. The absence of territorial integrity as a main concern of Greek foreign policy and the integral role played by interests which are conventionally considered domestic both indicate the importance of the international factor in the life of independent Greece.[52]

Had the Greeks been willing to remain a small state confined to the territory acquired at independence, Greece would undoubtedly have avoided much of the foreign interference it experienced. But the new state comprised only a minority of the Greek nation. The Great Idea, older than the Greek state itself, pressed the state to which it gave birth into its service. It demanded liberation of Greeks still subject to the Ottoman Empire or living under British colonial rule. As it involved their incorporation into a greater Greece, it presupposed territorial aggrandizement.

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[52]Theodore A. Couloumbis, John A. Petropulos and Harry J. Psomiades, *Foreign Interference in Greek Politics* (New York: Pella Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 21-27.

The basic problem was that the Great Idea made demands far exceeding the resources and capacities of the Greek state. Greece, unaided, was no match for the Ottoman Turks. The Idea also interfered with the nationalist aspirations of other concurrently emerging Balkan states who coveted some of the same territory claimed by the Greeks. Even worse, it disturbed the major European powers. All feared that the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire would upset the European balance of power and possibly provoke a European war.

Though positions taken by Greeks on this issue covered a wide spectrum, there were basically two poles, the moderate and the radical. The moderates advocated postponement of all military solutions until conditions proved favorable both domestically and internationally. This entailed internal development and the creation of a modern economic and administrative structure, as well as support from one or more powers and acquiescence of the rest. Until such a moment occurred, the most the moderates would advocate was an attempt to acquire limited territorial gains through the diplomatic action of the powers. The Great Idea became for them a distant goal.

The radicals were advocates of a military approach. They argued that Greek internal development could never go beyond the marginal without territorial expansion, and that the international situation was subject to manipulation. Unlike the moderates, they believed that time was against Greece. Due to the Ottoman reform movement and the international support it was receiving, the Ottoman Empire, they believed, was getting stronger. The

creation of other independent Balkan states and their progressive expansion threated to rob the Greeks of coveted provinces. Direct action seemed urgent.

Though internal factors were operative in supporting each of the above positions, the issue of territorial expansion was generally brought to a head by conditions and events outside Greece.

B. HISTORICAL CLAIMS

In 1853, following the visit of the Russian Prince Menshikov to Constantinople to demand a Russian protectorate of the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire, the Greek leadership believed that the hour for Greek expansion had arrived and they prepared to invade Thessaly. Without fully considering the web of European politics following the outbreak of the Crimean War in March 1854, Greece invaded Thessaly, Epirus and Macedonia, while the protecting powers were involved in war, with France and England pitted against Russia. This brought upon the Greek leadership the wrath of the Allies, France and Great Britain, and the Greek people began comparing themselves unfavorably to the Italians, who had enjoyed the support of France and Great Britain in their *risorgimento* movement for unification.

The accession of King George I to the throne in the mid-1800's marked a new era in foreign relations and in domestic affairs. The constitution of 1864 was a great advance on its predecessor, and important changes occurred in the political scene. It was believed that the era of intrigues by the protecting

powers was over, and that the necessity for the Great Idea had come to an end. Throughout King George's half-century reign, the four principal parties in Greece differed on trivial domestic matters, but had no visions of reforms or causes. They all subscribed to the Great Idea, but quarrelled over the means to achieve it. These parties, however, left it to the King to face the rebukes of foreign envoys and, though his support for the Great Idea was well known, denounced him for ignoring the interests of the kingdom.[53]

The period of 1909 to 1913, especially the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, represented a landmark in modern Greek history. By 1913, through collective military action with its Balkan neighbors (Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro), Greece acquired the major part of Macedonia, southern Epirus, numerous Aegean islands, and the long-sought prize of Crete. For the first time since independence, Greece had expanded territorially as a result of its own efforts rather than through the good graces of the powers, rendering Greece a state important enough to figure positively in the calculations of the major powers.

These sudden territorial gains, however, posed serious problems, one of which had to be faced for the first time in modern Greek history. It was the defense of territorial integrity. Greece now found itself the object of counter-irredentist claims. It faced the threatening prospect that any further ventures

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[53]Douglas Dakin, "The Formation of the Greek State: Political Developments Until 1923," John T. A. Koumoulides, ed., *Greece in Transition* (London: Zeno Booksellers & Publishers, 1977), pp. 44-49.

toward realizing the Great Idea would expose Greece to the loss of territory already acquired. The newly won territory was large, not easily defensible, and in need of organization as an integral part of the nation.

By the election of 14 November 1920, the defeat of the pro-expansionist government did not mean that half or more of the Greek people had renounced the Great Idea, it meant that those who for so long had been left in the cold were determined to profit from its realization.[54] Unlike later twentieth century bids for political office, fundamental disputes on foreign policy had no place in these election campaigns.

World War I and the international complications to which it gave rise had lasting results for Greece. One was the revocation, by the Treaty of Lausanne, of the special guarantee which Britain, France and Russia had enjoyed since 1832 and used as a justification of intervention in Greek affairs during the war. Its removal meant that Greece would be responsible for its own defense, and ensured that the powers would no longer be able to use such a legal device as a pretext for interference.

This marked the official end of the Great Idea as the chief operative goal of Greek foreign policy. Greece found itself in the position of having to reconcile itself to a permanent status as a small state. In return, however, it liberated itself from a commitment whose implementation had occasioned

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[54]Dakin, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

foreign interference, caused internal dissension, and heavily overtaxed its scarce resources. It no longer depended on international developments to rectify the disparity between the resources required to fulfill the goals of the Great Idea and the available resources of the state. It appeared that, as a consequence of the Lausanne Treaty and the exchange of minorities (see chapter three), the ethnological limits of the Greek people largely coincided, at last, with the territorial limits of the Greek state. The security of that state, rather than the liberation of the "unredeemed" part of it, became the major objective of official Greek foreign policy. Greece seemed to have no choice but to turn its attention toward internal development. Its sole obligation as a state was toward its citizens, swollen as they were in number by the sudden massive influx of largely destitute refugees. It appeared that the Great Idea was to be merely a vague notion of bygone days. Or was it?

C. A NEW "GREAT IDEA?"

The Great Idea which was the outgrowth of Greece's independence from the Turks pulled the Greeks eastward, in an attempt to recapture the glory, and some of the lands, that had been Byzantium. In the past decade an alternative idea has pulled them westward, as they have tried to dissolve themselves into the European Community. The end of the Cold War has given the Greeks a new foreign-policy option to the north.

For Greece, one of the most tangible results of the Cold War was an intangible--a political wall, erected between the Greeks and their once-familiar territory to the north. Now that the barrier has fallen, the Greeks are free to resume business in the Balkans, and this is the most natural and easily-accepted, even if occasionally unwelcome, outcome of the end of the Cold War.

> Like the Swiss, [the Greeks] combine a strong sense of national identity with a cheerful willingness to live and work outside the homeland. Like the Jews, they are exactly the sort of quick-decision, risk-accepting businessmen who are needed when a region is changing from communism to capitalism. The Balkans are the Greeks' natural new hinterland: or, rather, their rediscovered hinterland.[55]

Greece, of course, cannot make or break the Balkans all by itself. While the Greeks claim that, "In the Balkans, where flux and instability have become the order of the day, Greece appears to be the only country which still has anything approaching a policy,"[56] may be an exaggeration, Greece's potential to effect change should not be underestimated. There is still a small population of Greeks in Romania and Bulgaria, and Greece shares its Orthodox heritage with most of its northern neighbors. Northern Greece's Thessaloniki is a good

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[55]"A New Great Idea," *The Economist*, volume 327, number 7812 (22 May 1993), pp. 13.

[56]"Greek Foreign Policy Towards Current Events," in Greek, *Athena*, number 50 (Athens: Institute of International Political and Strategic Studies, October 1991), p. 297.

place for foreign capitalists to build factories which will sell their goods to and seek employees from the revived Balkans.

These changes and this reopening of a frontier is likely to change fundamentally how Greece interacts with the rest of Europe. Previously, Greece viewed its membership in the EC as the path away from isolation and as a generous source of cash. Until now, the Greeks have been among the most vocal advocates of a unified Europe, ready to move swiftly to a single foreign policy and a single army, but it is doubtful that the Greeks endorsing this move have fully considered its implications. It is difficult to imagine the Greeks letting basic decisions about their future be taken by a mainly non-Greek European organization. It is nearly laughable to imagine the Greeks leaving the defense of their border with Turkey to decisions taken in a distant European capital, and to a garrison in Thrace consisting mostly of soldiers from states other than Greece.

Perhaps even more critical than these considerations, however, are the ramifications of a latent "Great Idea" which simmers just below the surface of Greek foreign policy. A Greek Naval officer, speaking about the most recent Macedonian crisis in June 1993, stated that, "We tried to do it legally, by appealing to the EC and UN. If that didn't work, then maybe we should just take the matter into our own hands and take back what was ours in the beginning." There are others who feel similarly, such as the feminist university teacher and member of a small left-wing group who refers to *Η Πόλις* ("The

City," or Constantinople--today's Istanbul) with profound respect and with a real sense of loss.[57]

While this cannot be thought of as a majority opinion, it does have its adherents. Although the Great Idea may have died, it was never buried and thus lies ready to be ressurrected. The Greeks are not actively seeking a program of expansionism, but are not averse to taking advantage of propitious circumstances. Nor is Greek sentiment beyond an attachment to "preventive expansionism." Certainly, there will be no election platform based on "reacquisition" of territory, but the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement's (PASOK) campaign pledges with regard to Yugoslavia (which helped to earn for PASOK a Prime Minister's seat and a majority in the Parliament) to ensure that, "...we won't let them [the international community] cheat us again," indicate ominously that whether or not the government would resort to force of arms on its northern border, Greek leadership feels a need to respond to the mood of the Greek people--a mood which seems to include territorial "justice."

This may become especially evident in regard to the modern-day Macedonian dilemma. While Greece has officially disavowed any territorial claims within the boundaries of the struggling republic, it has had to listen and watch while political figures within the Skopje-based republic have made grandiose claims. Ljupco Georgievski, for instance, the oddly-titled Vice-

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[57]James Pettifer, *The Greeks*, p. 225.

President of the President of Macedonia, and leader of the VMRO-DPMNE, the strongest party in the Skopje parliament, claimed in a June 1991 speech that 51 per cent of "Macedonia's" people lived in Greece and should join a united "Macedonian" state under his leadership.[58] Maps and travel brochures discussing Macedonia's "coastal areas" are readily available in Skopje and its environs. Even in the northern part of Greek Epirus, one may occasionally spot T-shirts with maps of the three rivers in the region--Egej (Albania), Vardar (Greece), and Pirin (Bulgaria)--emblazoned with the slogan, "OUR NEW COUNTRY."[59]

Posters and placards and T-shirts and handbills all over Greece, from remote islands to the heart of Athens, proclaim with certainty that "Macedonia is Greece," and entreat the reader to "Read the Golden Pages of our History." Most often, these pronouncements are in English, but the statement that "Macedonia is Greece" is not simply the result of a sloppy translation in which the true meaning is that "Macedonia is Greek." Macedonia has come to embody the heart and soul of what is Greece, both in antiquity and today. From the greatest Greek of all in popular imagination, Alexander the Great, who

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[58]Pettifer, *The Greeks*, pp. 210-1.

[59]The wearer of this T-shirt was travelling alone on a bus from Ioannina to Athens in October of 1993. While the shirt was printed in English, the wearer claimed he was unable to engage in conversation, or discuss where a similar shirt could be obtained, in either Greek or English. Upon disembarking, he asked directions of the bus driver, who, it turned out, understood only Greek.

ruled in Macedon, to notions of liguistic continuity and purity, the rise or fall of this Macedonian question is very closely and literally linked to the rise or fall of the Modern Greek state. The fall of ex-Prime Minister Mitsotakis' New Democracy government in the 1993 election is attributed, in part, to his early concessions on the Macedonian issue and to his dismissal of Foreign Minister Samaras, whose hard-line views (later adopted by Mitsotakis himself) irritated the international community. Yet, if the Skopje-based republic collapses, as is likely without substantial outside assistance, the political vacuum must be filled, and the Greeks can have no certainty that an expansionist Bulgaria, sensing an opportunity to gain territory as well as a sphere of influence, will not emerge. This could result in a Bulgarian push for a Greater Bulgaria which wouls include Thessaloniki and the long-sought opening to the Aegean, as well as an opportunity to transform its economic prospects and political standing. As these territories were won by the shedding of Greek blood against the Turks and then fought over just as bitterly in the last War, the Greeks are unlikely to grant the Bulgarians any room to maneuver further west along the northern Greek border, even if that means the Greeks, themselves, must fully occupy that territory.

There are yet irredentist figures in Greece, such as Archbishop Sevastianos in Konitsa in Epirus, a supporter of the so-called Movement for the Recovery of Vorio Epirus (or Northern Epirus, the name many Greeks give to what is now Southern Albania). Archbishop Sevastianos is campaigning for the implementa-

tion of the 1914 Protocol of Corfu, which gave northern Epirus to Greece when the Great Powers were trying to sort out the results of the Second Balkan War. About 200,000 Greeks still live in Albania and form the majority of the population in many southern areas. Although the 1914 decision was revoked by the Ambassadors' Conference of Paris in 1921, when the Powers felt the only way to end the anarchy in Albania was to set up a centralized state based on Tirana, many Greeks (not all of the extreme Right) believe in the justice of the return of these territories and their incorporation into Greece. Most often cited are numbers and ancient origins of the Greeks in Albania and use of the Greek language under Ali Pasha. This sort of talk gives Greece's Albanian neighbors at least some grounds for believing that, if civil war broke out in Albania, Greece might be interested in the dismemberment of the Albanian state.[60]

Thus, it appears that politically and emotionally, the ideals of *Το Μεγάλη Ιδέα* are still in place in Greece, and it would require only a catalyst and the inattention (or lack of concern) of the international community to make this Great Idea once again an officially-sanctioned element of foreign policy. Preventing this eventuality is certainly feasible--speaking to the Greek pride and sense of self-preservation on issues like Macedonia and various Aegean disputes goes a long way. And its latent existence is unlikely to affect

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[60]Christopher Cviic, *Remaking the Balkans* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1991), pp. 101-2.

Greece's ongoing membership in institutions of European security any more than it has to date. But, stopping its spread once it is again released with official sanction--just as in the other Balkan wars--may be nearly impossible.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Εδώ δεν είναι παίζε γέλαδε, εδώ είναι Βαλκανία
(This place is not for playing and laughing, this is the Balkans. --Theophilus)

The future for Greece looks very difficult. The opportunities offered by European Community membership have not been fully exploited, and the Greek financial picture is less than ideal. On every side, as seen from Athens, there are problems. To the north is a rapidly spreading crisis in the Balkans, poor relations with Albania over illegal immigration and the Vorio Epirus question, and the conflict over Macedonia. To the east and north-east lie the always antagonistic interests of Turkey, and the unpredictable pattern of development of the ex-Communist states. Further south lies Cyprus, and the possibility of some future crisis on the troubled island which still has not seen a satisfactory conclusion to its central dilemma. From the west come questions of Greece's role in the New Europe with its single market and Maastricht commitments.

The 1990's for Greece are likely to mean a rediscovery of itself as a Balkan country and a greater distancing from external influences, especially under the newly-elected socialist Prime Minister. Throughout his 1993 campaign, as in his previous campaigns, he compared Greece to the underdeveloped third-world countries, claiming that Greece has more in common with them than with the Western states. This thinking is bound to exert a significant influence on Greece's interaction with the rest of the world. Will

tomorrow's Greek nation and state lead or follow? There are those who believe that the path is already clear.

> It may seem strange but in a real sense Greece is the regional superpower. To be a Balkan, not a European country, in the sense of being part of a potential federal Europe, must be a likely destiny for Greece. In cultural terms, if this means the reaffirmation of many features of traditional Greek life at risk from an increasingly technocratic and conformist culture...it must be a welcome development.[61]

Greek political parties tend to be one-man bands, and PASOK is by no means an exception. At the very least, the Greens (PASOK's nickname, based on the symbolic green rising sun which appears on all PASOK propaganda) will change their colors with the retirement or passing of the elder statesman currently in office; at most the party could fold or metamorphose. Without a doubt, its line and character would change. If that happens within the next four years, though unlikely, attempts at predicting the course of Greek politics would be foolhardy.

Certainly, the Greeks will not develop any love for the Turks. They have hated them for so long and with such an often-justified depth that the response is nearly Pavlovian. The common man is likely to say, when asked directly, that he hates neither the Turks nor Turkey, but will show quite different colors when asked about issues involving Turkey, such as Cyprus, minorities, even Macedonia. Turkey, it seems, has moved beyond the ancient enmities. When asked who is Turkey's most worrisome enemy in the fall of 1993, Turkish

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[61]Pettifer, *The Greeks*, p. 237.

Naval cadets, who are in the process of being fed government propaganda and can be expected to spout the officially sanctioned line, most often respond, "the Arabs," or even, "the Kurds." Turkey may posture and maneuver in ways which irritate Greece, but losing a fight at the cost of loss of pride would not devastate the Turks as it would the Greeks. The Greek rivalry, a Turk might explain, is a thing of the past.

Not to the Greeks. Although it might be argued that the Turks have no reason, or at least a much less compelling reason, to carry the flame of hatred than do the Greeks, the point is not moot. The Greeks have simply internalized and institutionalized their malice, and their enemy has not. Which is the stronger force--that of logic, or that of passion? One can only hope, in this case, the question is never brought to a test.

Importantly, the Greek people will support their government, regardless of how they slander their leaders in nightly taverna debates. After weeks of wild rallies in the streets of Athens during the 1993 elections, the day after the election saw a quiet sense of, "Now, we can get on with the business of making money instead of noise." Those who had voted for New Democracy, by and large, threw up their hands and said, "Oh well, it doesn't really matter anyway," as did the Delfian ex-schoolteacher, Eleni, and the Athens bus driver, Aris. The victors, such as Yiannis the cab driver on Chios, largely did the same, though with bigger smiles on their faces.

So, Mr. Papandreau has every reason to expect that his constituency would support him in any tentative or bold steps he takes toward expansion in the name of the Great Idea, of self-defense, or even of preventive aggression. The Greeks pride themselves on being clever and on being able to recognize as well as capitalize on an opportunity. If Albania becomes more of a problem, or Skopje evaporates, and the international community does not rally behind Greece as Greece feels it is the international community's responsibility to do, it is quite possible that Greece will feel the need to act on its as-yet latent nationalistic ideals. The Greeks would view this not as an aggressive move, but as a move made in justice or self-defense--toward the all-encompassing end of self-preservation.

That self-preservation is the ultimate end to all a Greek does throughout his life. Included in the "self," in a very real way, are the family and close friends. There is no great attachment to the land, other than as a way to make money, thus it would be irrelevant to a Greek whether the source of his income was the land his ancestors won or the territory just taken from a neighbor. The large number of successful Greeks abroad, who often neglect to reinvest in the homeland the funds they have gained abroad, is evidence of this.

But the family and the history are different matters. A piano tuner living in Monterey, California, who has never seen Greece and speaks only English, like his father and grandfather, considers himself just as Greek as the most central Athens inhabitant. And woe be to the sad individual who tries to take

food out of the mouths of a man's children. A Greek would readily give up all potential future pleasures (except, perhaps, smoking!) in order to ensure the safety and happiness of his progeny--a less prominent quality in other cultures.

The twin sides of the Greek national and personal character have always co-existed: the western-looking rationalist side, which gave rise to philosophy and mathematics, and the mystical Eastern side, which gave birth to Orthodoxy and is not really sure whether a national identity based on Athens is, at heart, Greek. There is no reason to expect that this Janus-like quality will not be a facet of future policy. Until the Greeks feel "safe," there will always be a possibility of massive reversion to old habits. The Greeks have not felt safe since the days of Alexander. In today's environment, no one feels safe.

So, the Great Idea lives in the Greek subconscious. It is not perpetuated through malice or nationalistic ambition alone, however, but also through a consuming passion to keep alive the glory of ancient Greece, which the modern Greek jealously protects as his birthright. There, our world began--one can hardly expect those who call themselves its inheritors to ignore their inheritance, or to lack a feeling of responsibility for maintaining a national glory worthy of it.

> Every great people believes, and one must believe if it intends to live long, that in it alone resides the salvation of the world; that it lives in order to stand at the head of the nations,...to lead them in a concordant choir toward the final goal preordained for them.[62]

By this measure, and by many others, the Greeks are, indeed, a great people.

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[62]Feodor Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer* (New York: George Braziller, 1954), p. 575.

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